

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 6065

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO, MILI

SUBJ: POLITICAL-MILITARY SITUATION

REF: FBIS LONDON LD140302Y OCT 75

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER AZEVEDO ADDRESSED NATION OCT 13. IN
SPEECH DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS,
AZEVEDO REITERATED NEED TO RESTORE DISCIPLINE WITHIN ARMED
FORCES IF GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY TO GOVERN WAS TO BE MAINTAINED.

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BUT AZEVEDO OFFERED NO SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR DEALING WITH THE

PROBLEM OF AUTHORITY IN THE MILITARY. IT IS LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT IF AZEVEDO HAS SOME MEASURES IN MIND, HE BELIEVES IT TACTICALLY UNWISE TO ANNOUNCE THEM PUBLICLY--JUST AS HE DID NOT ANNOUNCE PUBLICLY THE SPECIFIC ECONOMIC MEASURES HE PLANS.
END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTER AZEVEDO ADDRESSED NATION EVENING OCT 13. ALTHOUGH ADDRESS WAS DEVOTED OVERWHELMINGLY TO ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES (SEPTTEL), AZEVEDO INTRODUCED DISCUSSION WITH A NUMBER OF COMMENTS ON CURRENT CRISIS OF AUTHORITY, INCLUDING:
--AUTHORITY AND DISCIPLINE CAN AND OUGHT TO BE REVOLUTIONARY BUT MUST ALSO ASSURE THE NORAML EXERCISE OF THE POWERS OF THE STATE.
--THE RECENT CAMPAIGN OF MILITARY INDISCIPLINE AND DISHONOR COULD PLACE THIS OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENT IN AN UNTENABLE POSITION SINCE A DISCIPLINED AND COHESIVE ARMY IS ESSENTIAL.
--WITHOUT THE ARMED FORCES THERE IS NO AUTHORITY AND WITHOUT AUTHORITY THERE IS NO GOVERNMENT.
--THE SIXTH GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO DEFEND ITSELF FROM ATTACKS FROM BOTH THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT. THERE WILL NEVER BE A RETURN TO FASCISM.
--THE SITUATION HAS BEEN CLARIFIED. THE SIXTH GOVERNMENT KNOWS BOTH ITS ENEMIES AND ITS SOURCES OF SUPPORT. ONE SHOULD NOT CONFUSE THE COUNTRY WITH LISBON. THE SIXTH GOVERNMENT WILL RESPOND TO ATTEMPTS TO OVERTHROW IT BY GOVERNING.

2. GONCALVES INTERVIEW: FIRST INTERVIEW WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES SINCE HIS DEPARTURE FROM GOVERNMENT APPEARED IN OCT 11 LISBON PRESS. PRINCIPAL GONCALVES COMMENTS INCLUDED:
--CURRENT CRISIS WAS PRIMARILY DUE TO SPLIT WITHIN ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM) BETWEEN THE RIGHT, LED BY MELO ANTUNES, AND THE LEFT. THE RIGHT, AFTER STAGING A SUCCESSFUL "PALACE COUP," WAS NOW LEADING THE COUNTRY NO IN THE DIRECTION OF SOCIALISM, BUT TOWARDS A POLITICAL SYSTEM WHICH WOULD RESEMBLE THAT OF LIBYA OR EGYPT, AND WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD TO FASCISM. ONLY THE LEFT, IN STRICT ALLIANCE WITH THE WORKING CLASSES, COULD PREVENT THIS.
--PRIMARY CAUSES OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS WERE: THE PRE-JUDICIAL EFFECTS OF THE DESTRUCTION OF MONOPOLY CAPITALISM, THE "ECONOMIC BOYCOTT" OF PORTUGAL BY THE WEST; PARTISAN POLITICAL
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STRUGGLES WITHIN THE BUREAUCRACY, AND THE DEPARTURE OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY FROM THE FOURTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT AT A TIME WHEN CRUCIAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WERE ABOUT TO BE ADDRESSED.

3. METALLURGICAL WORKERS ELECTIONS: PRO-INTERSINDICAL SLATE WON OCT 11 ELECTION IN LISBON METALLURGICAL WORKERS UNION ELECTION IN LIGHT TURNOUT (LESS THAN 10,000 OF MEMBERSHIP OF OVER 200,000). DETAILS REPORTED SEPTTEL). METAL WORKERS FROM SOUTH

OF COUNTRY ISSUED STRIKE CALL OCT 12 FOLLOWING JOINT MEETING WITH EVORA RURAL WORKERS. EVORA MEETING CALLED FOR TOTAL PARALYZATION OF ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHERN PART OF COUNTRY "WITHIN FEW DAYS" IF STEPS ARE NOT TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT IMMEDIATELY TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL AND AGRICULTURAL CREDIT NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE AGRARIAN REFORM PROGRAM.

4. BISHOPS CONFERENCE: NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS, MEETING IN FATIMA OCT 6-10, CALLED FOR SOLUTIONS TO NATIONAL PROBLEMS WITHOUT VIOLENCE, WHILE TAKING A STRONG STAND ON EDUCATION ISSUE. BISHOPS ELECTED DOM ANTONIO RIBEIRO, CARDINAL PATRIARCH OF LISBON, AS CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN FOR NEXT THREE YEARS. PASTORAL LETTER ISSUED FOLLOWING MEETING ATTACKED "MONOLITHIC" FORM OF EDUCATION, WHICH DOES NOT LEAVE ROOM FOR RELIGIOUS DIVERISTY, AND CALLED FOR REPAL OF GONCALVES GOVERNMENT DECREE WHICH AUTHORIZED STATE, IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, TO TAKE OVER PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

5. POLITICIO-MILITARY ACTIVITY: ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF CARLOS FABIO'S OFFICE ANNOUNCED THAT FABIO WOULD TRAVEL TO OPORTO OCT 14 FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NORTHERN MILITARY REGION COMMANDER PIRES VELOSO. ANNOUNCEMENT FOLLOWED OCT 13 MEETING IN LISBON BETWEEN FABIO AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM SERRA DO PILAR ARTILLERY REGIMENT (RASP), OCCUPIED SINCE OCT 6 BY RADICAL MILITARY.

--IN OEIRAS, NEAR LISBON, NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS AND WORKERS' COMMISSINS HELD DEMONSTRATION OF SUPPORT ON OCT 13 FOR RADICAL COMMANDER OF COSTAL ARTILLERY REGIMENT (RAC), WHOSE TRANSFER HAD RECENTLY BEEN ORDERED.

--COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON OCT 12 APPROVED MEASURE AUTHORIZED CALL-UP OF VETERANS IN READY RESERVES TO FILL POSITIONS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER.

--ON OCT 13, SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) NATIONAL COMMITTEE REAFFIRMED ITS SUPPORT FOR SIXTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO RESTORE CONFIDENTIAL

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DISCIPLINE AND PUBLIC ORDER AND REJECTED COMMUNIST CALL FOR MEETING OF PS, PCP, FAR LEFT, AND AFM TO DISCUSS CURRENT POLITICAL-MILITARY SITUATION. SEVERAL THOUSAND PEOPLE TOOK PART IN OCT 13 PS RALLY IN BRAGA ON SAME THEMES.

--OCT 12 POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPD) SECRETARY GENERAL SA CARNEIRO ACCUSED COMMUNISTS OF FOMENTING CURRENT DISORDER AND INDISCIPLINE IN ARMED FORCES; PPD SPONSORED PRO-GOVERNMENT RALLY IN VIANO DO CASTELLO ON OCT 13.

--SIZEABLE GROUP REPRESENTING VARIOUS "PROGRESSIVE ORGANIZATIONS" DEMONSTRATED IN DOWNTOWN LISBON OCT 13 DEMANDING INCREASED POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN LISBON MUNICIAPL GOVERNMENT. A DETERMINED EFFORT IS BEING MADE BY THE COMMUNISTS AND FAR LEFT TO GET CONTROL OF THE LISBON ARE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

6. COMMENT: AZEVEDO'S COMMENTS ON DISCIPLINE AND AUTHORITY WERE

LARGELY A REITERATION OF PREVIOUS STATEMENTS BY REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. SUCH EXHORTATIONS WILL NOT RESTORE EITHER MILITARY DISCIPLINE OR CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO PUT ITS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER. CONSPICUOUSLY LACKING FROM AZEVEDO'S SPEECH WERE SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF AUTHORITY IN THE MILITARY. IT IS LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT IF AZEVEDO HAS SUCH MEASURES IN MIND HE BELIEVES IT TACTICALLY WISE NOT TO ANNOUNCE THEM PUBLICLY--JUST AS HE DID NOT ANNOUNCE PUBLICLY THE SPECIFIC ECONOMIC MEASURES HE PLANS.

7. THE GONCALVES INTERVIEW MARKS THE FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT BY THE EX-PRIME MINISTER. COMMUNIST-LINGIN PRESS HAS FOR PAST WEEK BEEN REFERRING WITH INCREASED FREQUENCY TO POSSIBLE RETURN OF GONCALVES, AND CALLS FOR GONCALVES' RETURN ARE AGAIN HEARD AT LEFT WING RALLIES. FACT THAT GONCALVES, AN ACTIVE DUTY GENERAL, FEELS FREE TO STRONGLY CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT IS HARDLY NOTED IN THE PORTUGAL OF TODAY.

8. EFFORT TO TOPPLE AZEVEDO BY PCP, GONCALVES SUPPORTERS, AND ULTRA-LEFT IS NOW JOINED BY PCP-DOMINATED METAL WORKERS AND RURAL WORKERS, A DANGEROUS COMBINATION IF AZEVEDO CANNOT GET CONTROL OF HIS TROOPS.
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